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USIB-D-46.4/4
(COMIREX-D-25.7/1)
27 September 1967
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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Reconnaissance Coverage of North Korea

REFERENCE : USIB-D-41.14/276 (COMOR-D-25/201) 19 January 1966,
Limited Distribution (Approved as of 28 January 1966)

1. The attached memorandum on the subject from the Chairman, Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation (COMIREX), reviews the need for photographic reconnaissance of North Korea and makes recommendations with respect thereto in paragraph 8. Attention is invited to the reservations expressed by the State member of COMIREX in paragraph 7.

URGENT USIB ACTION REQUESTED

2. Board Members are requested to advise the Secretariat by 1630 hours today, 27 September 1967, of their concurrence in or other views on the recommendations in paragraph 8 of the attachment. If it is not possible to obtain concurrence today it is planned to place this matter on the agenda for consideration at the USIB meeting tomorrow, 28 September.

[]

Executive Secretary

Attachment

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USIB-D-46. 4/4
(COMIREX-D-25. 7/1)
27 September 1967
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Reconnaissance Coverage of North Korea

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for support of the CINCPAC requirement for increased coverage of North Korea and a recommendation for use of high altitude, very high performance aircraft and/or drones to obtain current photographic coverage of that area.

2. The intelligence community maintains a list of targets in North Korea of current intelligence concern. At the present time there are fifty-nine priority targets on this list. These are included in the CINCPAC requirement. Since the approval of the long range program for reconnaissance in the Far East in January 1966, we have been attempting to meet a requirement to cover fifty percent of the North Korean targets quarterly and essentially all of them semiannually. We have never been able to meet this requirement with the reconnaissance assets employed. This problem has been under constant scrutiny in COMOR and COMIREX since mid-1966 when it became apparent that we were not meeting the requirement. The Committee has on several occasions reaffirmed the need for coverage of North Korea by the TACKLE program. Because of conflicting priority and operational considerations, the TACKLE program has not been able to provide the required coverage. In fact, North Korea was covered last by a U-2 on 31 July 1965. In any case, the presence of a substantial number of SAM sites would seriously limit the areas accessible to the U-2.

3. Satellites have been used heavily and have provided all of the useful photography obtained on targets in the interior of North Korea. Coverage by KH-4 has been useful to identify SAM sites, ground force installations, new construction, etc., and can provide air order of battle information. It does not have adequate resolution, however, to

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provide ground force order of battle and related military information. Coverage of North Korea by KH-4 was last attempted by Mission 1043 in August 1967. Photography of seventy-five to eighty percent of the country was attempted but heavy cloud cover was encountered.

4. High resolution satellite photographic systems have provided a limited amount of useful photography. []

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nine high priority targets.

5. Department of Defense reconnaissance assets under theater control have attempted to supplement national reconnaissance assets. These, however, are confined largely to oblique photography from peripheral tracks and do not satisfy all of the Commander's requirements.

6. Since the requirement was established in January 1966, there has been a substantial reorganization of North Korean military forces detected from COMINT. The effects of this reorganization have not been adequately covered in photography. In recent weeks there has been an increase in tension along the Demilitarized Zone and an increase in North Korean clandestine penetration of South Korea. This has led to increased concern for the state of our knowledge of the North Korean military posture. This concern has caused CINCPAC to propose the deployment of BLACK SHIELD aircraft over North Korea. The problem has been reviewed by COMIREX and it is our conclusion that we are unlikely to meet our current requirements for high resolution photography unless very high performance aircraft are employed or unless we are willing to mount a program for the use of drone aircraft over North Korea. In this connection, it should be noted that BLACK SHIELD has demonstrated the capability to cover very large areas in a very short period of time and that several successful drone missions would be required to provide comparable coverage. This suggests that acceptance of the CINCPAC recommendation that the BLACK SHIELD aircraft be employed would result in an earlier fulfillment of the requirement.

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7. In discussing the situation, the State Department member of COMIREX recognized the deficiency in meeting existing requirements, but noted that the deficiency had existed for some time. He did not feel that the current situation was sufficiently critical to justify political risks involved in the introduction of new overhead reconnaissance programs in the area (BLACK SHIELD and Drone). He also expressed reservations concerning the wisdom of exposing BLACK SHIELD to Soviet tracking. The Chairman has examined this concern and notes that tracks can be planned so as to minimize the provocative aspects.

8. In view of the considerations outlined above, it is recommended that the USIB accept and support the CINCPAC requirement, and seek permission to employ high altitude, very high performance reconnaissance aircraft and/or drones over North Korea to acquire necessary photographic coverage.

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Chairman

Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

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